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COMING STYLES IN CARPETS.

ONE and unity are the great features of successful carpet design. The triumph of design is in rendering the pattern attractive without unduly arresting attention, so as to afford pleasure in its survey as an attractive whole.

In the goods turned out for the coming season small patterns prevail. Geometric figures and arabesque designs enter largely into combinations. Ecu grounds are less freely adopted, and white is coming into use for floral designs and tracery. Surfaces, however, are well worked over, either very partially disclosing the ground or wholly



A FRENCH CARPET, RENAISSANCE STYLE.

hiding it. Many of the patterns of Axminster velvets, Brussels, and Wiltons are in soft colors. Borders are narrowed from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$.

In patterns smaller figures are being used. New colors are introduced and tints are blended indifferently, whilst the startling contrasts between brilliant hues, in favor for several years past, are retired. They represented a violent reaction against the sombre hues that previously prevailed. Velvet pile and Brussels carpets are the classes mainly in request for parlor, sitting, and dining-rooms, whilst for bedrooms and general use in country districts ingrains are adopted. Some of the best designs are to be met with in cheap goods which was not the case formerly, and this circumstance imparts a stimulus to their sale.

There has been a perfect revolution in designs. The demand of the public three years ago for flaming bright hues carried manufacturers into



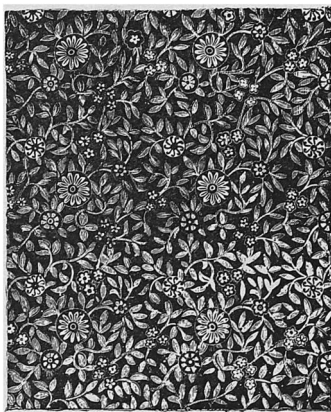
A NEW GERMAN CARPET.

that channel, the latter expected that they would last but for one season, whereas they showed a surprising vitality. Instead of chintz colors and brilliant designs, the fashion has set in for strong quiet tones, for patterns less obtrusive, and, on the whole, more artistic. Many of the colors are new, and harmony of effect is combined with multifarious contrasts.

In exquisite moresques we see combined wine, garnet, and old gold, inducing superb contrasting effects. A noticeable feature is in the few colors used in the working up of patterns that are stylish and yet subdued. A beautiful play of form and color, illustrative also of the tendency to avoid mere mannerism, is illustrated in the treatment of leaves which instead of veins have traceries of horizontal lines of color of irregular breadth.

Some most remarkable and indescribably attractive patterns are in wood color and gold. Another beautiful design has its only analogy in nature, in the appearance of the autumn leaves of a forest after a frost. In one pattern the graceful beauty of shell forms is suggested in its many varied combinations; other patterns rival enamel work in the minuteness of the figures and the lustrous lights setting off deep colors. Many of the Wilton patterns revive the glories of old French tapestry. The Kensington art carpets are likely to continue in demand owing to their artistic patterns, for which a few tints, often two shades of the same color, suffice.

Brussels, tapestry carpets, and rugs, produced for the season, present colors shaded off with marvelous delicacy, the shades appearing to melt away like vapor in thin air. Persian rugs in antique patterns have been brought out in full force, displaying nice harmonies of color. The Smyrna rugs made in this country are superior in



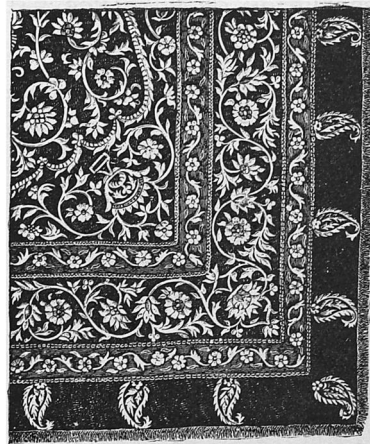
A KIDDERMINSTER.

quality and finish to their eastern prototypes. There is a larger sale of our domestic Oriental rugs than of all foreign rugs imported. They have the advantage of being well shown, being exposed not only in carpet, but in upholstery and bric-a-brac stores throughout the country.

The artistic progress of the carpet manufacture is due not only in improving and adapting the looms to any required purpose, but to the original patterns turned out by leading companies such as the Lowell, Bigelow, Hartford, who have their own designers. The first-named company, so famous for its ingrains and making only the most costly goods in these as well as Wiltons and body Brussels, holds a high position historically. Entering the field in 1837, it has been continuously supplying these original designs, never lowering its grade of first-class fabrics and using the same number of threads and ends.

One branch of artistic industry will frequently be found to aid another. Thus a great many carpet patterns are taken from wall papers, and wall-paper men on their part have reciprocated the compliment by adopting carpet designs. The freedom of appropriation thus established is not greater than prevails among carpet men, excluding, of course, leading companies who pride themselves on producing original patterns by their own designers, among whom the Lowell, Hartford, Bigelow, Yonkers, and certain Philadelphia companies are prominent.

Some decorators have had carried out the pattern of the carpets of rooms on the wall paper with certain modifications of color, and even repeated these in hangings and other upholstery furnishings. This is a ready way of securing harmony of color, and with a judiciously selected design the effect is pleasing. A French practice, where a costly Aubusson is laid down, is to repeat the design, together with the border, making



PERSIAN CARPET, BLUE EMBROIDERED IN GOLD AND SILVER.

some transfer of tints on the ceiling. Whilst the demand for Aubussons is almost *nil*, designs taken from these fabrics are being in many instances adopted as ceiling decorations.

A very general foundation for carpets is a moth-proof quilted lining, which, besides its protective qualities gives a soft elastic spring to the tread, and lessens the wear of surfaces.

A suggestion may not here be out of place. If a room is to be artistically decorated and furnished, the carpet may with advantage be selected first, thus establishing it as a key. It will render easier the task of selecting a suitable pattern of paper or fresco design, with reference at least to the choice of leading colors. The carpet patterns of the coming season, owing to the small scale of the figures and subdued colors, allow of more assured results in harmonizing surroundings. The abundance of choice patterns shows that designers have worked unrestrainedly, and, unfettered by special specific requirements, have been encouraged to bring all the resources of their art to produce picturesque and taking effects.

The aggregate annual business done in carpets may be estimated at \$150,000,000. Philadelphia supplies the largest quantity of any city, but not the highest total value. Fall transactions on western account were on a large scale and there was an important increase in the southern trade. In the South not only are carpets steadily superseding matting, but a disposition is manifested to abandon the florid and strongly pronounced designs for quiet and reposeful patterns. There is a steady expansion of business in this line with South America, where our carpets obtain an increasing preference from their more moderate cost as compared with those of Europe, and their admirable patterns.

On the whole the outlook is most satisfactory. The generally choice character of goods and their novelty have tempted wholesale dealers in the great centers of manufacture to buy more freely.

THE following tribute to English art culture is clipped from a London paper. Judging from English authorities, we imagined this sort of thing was confined to America: "Art is not always appreciated by Mammon, even in these days when Mammon does its best to acquire a 'high tone.' Here is an illustration which has just come under my notice. The wife of a 'self-made' member of Parliament a few days ago became greatly enamored of some flower painting in the drawing-room of a lady of fashion whom she had the good fortune to visit. Mrs. M.P. inquired the name of the artist, and on being told, registered a mental vow to possess similar works of art in her own *salon*, since it was evidently 'the correct thing.' Next day she sought an interview with the artist, who happened to be a lady in reduced circumstances. Mrs. M.P. stated her wishes, and asked the terms on which they could be complied with. 'The series will cost you twenty pounds, madame,' replied the artist. 'Twenty pounds!' shrieked Mrs. M.P. 'Good gracious me, whatever for? I should think a couple of sovereigns would more than pay for *all the paint on them screens*.' The bargain, I may remark, was not concluded."

A PIANO should be a part of every house's furniture. Even if you cannot play yourself, you will have friends who can. Besides, when you have acquired a piano the ambition may be awakened in you to learn to use it, and you will be the gainer of a new accomplishment.